



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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April 15, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe *Wendy L. Watanabe*
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – VISTA DEL MAR
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES – MAIN FACILITY AND BOYS GROUP
HOMES**

We have completed a review of Main Facility Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services. The Group Home contracts with the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation.

Main Facility Group Home is a 35-bed facility, which provides care for boys and girls ages 10-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Main Facility Group Home was providing services for eight DCFS children and 26 privately placed children.

Boys Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Boys Group Home was providing services for one DCFS child and two privately placed children.

Main Facility Group Home is located in the Second District and Boys Group Home is located in the Third District

Scope of Review

The purpose of our review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. In addition, the review covers basic child safety

and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, employee records, a facility inspection and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement, except for a few deficient areas. The Boys Group Home needs to replace or repaint the kitchen baseboards and cabinets, clean the walls, replace the closet doorknob, and repair the ceiling in bedroom two.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:DC:AA:gfw

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, DCFS
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Joel Mogy, Board President, Vista Del Mar
Elias Lefferman, Ph.D., Executive Director, Vista Del Mar
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services
Main Facility Group Home
Los Angeles, California 90034
License Number: 191600721
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Main Facility Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The grounds are clean and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendation

None.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Five

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendation

None.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Five

Comments:

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendation

None.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Five

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation

None.

V. Psychotropic Medication**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents****Comments:**

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication and are aware of their right to refuse medication. Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendation

None.

VI. Personal Rights**Method of assessment – Interviews with children****Sample size: Five****Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, have private visitors, and attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

Recommendation

None.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Five

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

None.

VIII. Personnel Background Checks

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Sample size: Twenty-two

Comments:

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

Recommendation

None.

**Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services
Boys Group Home
Canoga Park, California 91306
License Number: 191290180
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Boys Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

Generally, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home and the Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the paint on the kitchen baseboards and cabinets is badly chipped.

Overall, the children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, the beds all have a full complement of linens, and children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate. However, in bedroom two, the walls are dirty, the closet doorknob is missing and the ceiling has water damage. In bedroom four, there is no cover for the light fixture.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

1. Vista Del Mar management:

- a. Replace or repaint the kitchen baseboards and cabinets.
- b. Clean the walls in bedroom two.
- c. Replace the closet doorknob in bedroom two.

- d. Repair the ceiling in bedroom two.
- e. Replace the light fixture cover in bedroom four.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: One

Comments:

The child meets the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in the Program Statement. The child was assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that the child is receiving treatment services.

Recommendation

None.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: One

Comments:

The child is attending school, is provided with educational support and resources to meet his educational needs and is progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of the child's daily living, self-help and survival skills.

The child is provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendation

None.

IV. Recreation and Activities**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews****Sample size: One****Comments:**

The Group Home provides the child with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. The child is provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities and also participates in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which he has an interest. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation**None.****V. Psychotropic Medication****Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

According to the Agency's management, there are currently no children taking psychotropic medications. This information is appropriately documented.

The child is aware of his right to refuse medication.

Recommendation**None.****VI. Personal Rights****Method of assessment – Interviews with children****Sample size: One****Comments:**

The child is informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. The child reports that he feels safe in the Group Home and is provided with appropriate staff supervision. The child expresses satisfaction with the quality of his interactions with staff and reports that the staff treats him with respect and dignity.

The child reports that he is assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. The child is allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send

and receive unopened mail and have private visitors. The child attends religious services of his choice.

The child reports that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

The child reports satisfaction with meals and snacks. The child also receives voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

Recommendation

None.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: One

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to the child. The child is provided with opportunities to select his own clothes. Clothing provided to the child is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides the child with the required minimum weekly allowance. The child spends his allowance as he chooses.

The Group Home provides the child with adequate personal care items. The child is also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining a photo album/life book.

Recommendation

None.

VIII. Personnel Background Checks

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Sample size: Four

Comments:

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

Recommendation

None.

Joel R. Mogy
Chairman, Board of Directors

Elias Lefferman, Ph.D.
President/Chief Executive Officer



February 25, 2009

Candace Rhue
Department of Auditor Controller, World Trade Center
350 South Figueroa Street, 8th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90071

Dear Ms. Rhue:

The Corrective Action Plan pertaining to the January 27, 2009 audit of Vista Del Mar's Boys Group Home is the following. Please note that all requested actions have been implemented.

- a. Repair or repaint the kitchen baseboards and cabinets
(Completed on 2/7/2009-see attached photographs)
- b. Clean the walls in bedroom #2
(Completed on 2/14/08)
- c. Replace the doorknob in bedroom #2
(Completed on 2/4/2009-see attached photograph)
- d. Repair the ceiling in bedroom #2
(Completed on 2/13/09-see attached photographs)
- e. Replace the light fixture cover in bedroom #4
(Completed on 2/4/2009-see attached photograph)

The plan to ensure that the deficiencies noted will not occur in the future is that Catherine Delgado, Group Home Supervisor, will continue to monitoring the above on a weekly basis. Group Home staff will ensure that walls are cleaned as needed as per their weekly inspections. As needed, Catherine will email Vista Del Mar's Maintenance Department to request that needed repairs occur. David Locken, QM Director, is able to monitor time frames for requested repairs in Vista Del Mar's Computer system to ensure that that requests occur in a timely manner.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Amy Jaffe, LCSW
Senior Vice President of Operations

Cc: QM
Elias Lefferman, PhD, CEO
Catherine Delgado, Boys Group Home Supervisor
Contracts Compliance Department